

SECRET

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

File

APR 11 1960

Dear Mr. President:

I am forwarding herewith the Military Space Projects Report for the period of January and February 1960.

One (1) MIDAS and two (2) DISCOVERER launchings were made during February 1960. Unfortunately, due to malfunctions during the boost phase, none were successful in placing a vehicle in orbit. Continuing effort and renewed emphasis is being placed on improving the reliability of components and system testing. Several DISCOVERER, MIDAS and SAMOS vehicles and payloads are nearing completion and it is hopefully expected that a number of successful launchings will be achieved during the current quarter. Tentatively, launching of the second MIDAS, DISCOVERER XI and XII and the second TRANSIT are scheduled for this month.

Project NOTUS (Communication Satellites) is being redirected with increased emphasis placed on an ultimate 24-hour global satellite communication system. The former medium orbit SAC POLAR satellite systems (STEER and TACKLE) and the former 24-hour global system (DECREE) are being reoriented to provide a revised 24-hour global system (ADVENT). The interim communication satellite system (COURIER) is proceeding as previously scheduled with the first launching scheduled for July 1960.

? There is included herein a report of progress on the SATURN Project. However, inasmuch as the transfer of the SATURN Project to NASA was officially completed in March, no further progress reports will be made thereon. However, this vehicle has potential military application and the Department of Defense will continue to follow the project with considerable interest and assist in the development thereof insofar as practicable.

With great respect, I am

Faithfully yours,



James H. Douglas

DEPUTY

Inclosure - 1

Military Space Projects Report

DECLASSIFIED

The President

Authority MC 76-51 #308

The White House

By Wc NLE Date 11/10/77

SECRET

SEC DEF CONT NO. 5-354

SECRET

P R O J E C T H I G H L I G H T S

During January and February 1960

On 4 February 1960, DISCOVERER IX was launched from the Pacific Missile Range. The final count-down and lift-off were normal. Instrumentation indicated early termination of booster thrust and short operation of the second-stage engine. Orbital velocity was not obtained. The AGENA vehicle impacted in the ocean about 400 miles south of the launch site. DISCOVERER X was launched on 19 February 1960. Immediately after lift-off, the THOR booster started pitch oscillations and the command destruct signal was sent at T-plus 56.4 seconds.

The first MIDAS flight test vehicle was launched from the Atlantic Missile Range on 26 February 1960. A satellite orbit was not obtained because of a malfunction or failure, which occurred during the boost phase. Preliminary indications are that a malfunction occurred during the firing of the retro-rockets to provide separation of the booster from the AGENA vehicle. The second MIDAS launching has been scheduled for April 1960.

NOTUS Project (Communication Satellites) is being redirected with an increased emphasis towards an ultimate 24-hour global satellite communication system. Former medium-orbit SAC POLAR satellite systems (STEER and TACKLE) and the former 24-hour global communication system (DECREE) are being re-oriented to provide a revised 24-hour global system (ADVENT). In the case of the interim communication satellite system (COURIER), the program is currently limited to two (2) satellite launchings, as previously scheduled, with the first launching scheduled for July 1960 and the second launching for September 1960.

Fabrication of the second-stage vehicles for the first three SAMOS flight tests is proceeding on schedule. These vehicles will carry a combination visual/ferret payload. Visual (photographic) and ferret (electromagnetic) payloads for the first flight test have been delivered and are undergoing functional tests and preparations for installation in the AGENA vehicle. The first launching of a SAMOS vehicle is scheduled for September 1960.

SECRET